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ABSTRACT

An immediate equity concern is the half million young minority Americans who are out of work, out of school, out of jail, and alienated. The current situation can be traced to the enslavement of blacks and their subsequent treatment after the Civil War. A national educational philosophy for blacks has been developed that is based upon the theories of two prominent black educators, Booker T. Washington and W. E. B. DuBois. Three major recommendations can be made for further action. All teachers must study rigorously, experientially, and systematically the backgrounds of the minorities who will be their students. Black studies courses are essential to the professional preparation of vocational education teachers. Vocational education teachers and counselors must search for all indices of learning ability in minority youth and be aware that tests have a limited capacity to measure what they purport to measure. All vocational educators must understand and acknowledge their own values with respect to the issues of fairness and justice to overcome prejudice. (YLB)

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EQUITY FROM A RACIAL/ETHNIC PERSPECTIVE

by Samuel D. Proctor

SUMMARY The following paper orients the reader to the current status of minority youth. It traces the current situation to the enslavement of blacks and their subsequent treatment after the Civil War. The author then describes the development of a national educational philosophy for blacks based upon the theories of two prominent black educators, Booker T. Washington and W.E.B. DuBois. The author presents three major recommendations for future action. He believes strongly that all teachers must study rigorously, experientially, and systematically the backgrounds of the minorities who will be their students. Black studies courses are essential to the professional preparation of vocational education teachers. He believes that vocational education teachers and counselors must search for all indices of learning ability in minority youth and describes the limited capacity of tests to measure what they purport to measure. He concludes that all vocational educators must understand and acknowledge their own values with respect to the issues of fairness and justice to overcome prejudice.

One of the most immediate concerns of our country, and yet one of the most frustrating dilemmas is trying to find a way to appropriate the benefits of education and skill training to those who need it most in order to overcome their enormous social and economic deficits. We are faced with something of the magnitude of a half million young minority Americans who are out of work, out of school, out of jail, and alienated.

They are described in editorials, portrayed in television documentaries, charted on graphs in sociology texts, and punched on IBM cards that read "Don't fold, spindle, or mutilate." Their socialization has been so widely negative and deficient that their dysfunction in society has become endemic. They live on funds garnered from temporary job "training" programs, street hustles, stealing, and parental indulgence.

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Linda Proctor



Because they are the logical outcome of a long series of bad decisions, social neglect, poverty, and poor education, they are at once the object of pity and the target of political barbs and public scorn. Notwithstanding, we are speaking of real people with warm bodies and fairly normal neuronal equipment. They are also incendiary. Their lives can be directed as easily toward crime and destruction as toward self-development, a sense of purpose, serious preparation for the world of work, and productivity. They should be the primary concern of professionals in vocational-technical education.

It may seem that the needs and challenges of disadvantaged minorities have grown and been magnified in recent times, but the fact is that serious attention was not paid to them until the late 1960s. Because of the current national attention paid to youthful social failures, it simply appears that they are the new "vogue" in educational themes. The Office of Economic Opportunity in 1965 discovered in the studies of the Upward Bound and Job Corps programs that the nation did have this reservoir of idle youth. The reports on the riots of the late sixties revealed that this pool of uneducated, unemployed youth lay exposed across the national scene.

Social workers, Ivy League deans, federal experts, "street" analysts, and widely known social theorists were summoned to focus on this phenomenon. Because the topic was so novel, hardly anyone knew where to begin. This segment of the population had previously been hidden from "freeway traffic." They hung around poolrooms, grocery stores, and the front doors of high schools. They were found near bowling alleys and filling stations where old Chevrolets and Plymouths were restyled and their rears lifted. They slept during the day and roamed at night. Police blotters and hospital morgues knew more about them than anyone else.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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Somehow, though, we were more attracted to the idea of going to the moon than we were to the challenge of making producers and taxpayers of this segment of the population. The idea of confronting this issue with bold commitment, of embracing them as persons of intrinsic dignity and inestimable human potential, was deferred in favor of building more atomic missiles. The obvious erosion of national strength from within was ignored in favor of building defenses against possible attacks from without.

The hard fact is that racism has pervaded the American culture since 1619. It was part and parcel of the first boatload of blacks that landed at Jamestown, Virginia. Shortly after it was discovered that blacks could survive the North American diet, temperature, and bacteria, slavery was instituted with all of its hideous corollaries. So today's black minority condition is traceable to this incipient condition. It is hardly imaginable what deliberate efforts were made to dehumanize the black slave.

Fred M. Hechinger (1976), education writer for the *New York Times*, emphasized this moral issue facing education in his *Report on America's secondary schools*.

He said:

We have had some narrow escapes. Discrimination, long condoned by custom and even by the courts, survived the end of slavery and came closer than any other national failing to tearing the Nation apart. Though by no means alone in this responsibility, the schools must shoulder a large share in the remaining task of healing the Nation's self-inflicted wounds and of moving America toward the mutual understanding and tolerance essential to the creation of an integrated society.

Let me return to the beginning. "History," wrote Jefferson in his Notes on Virginia, "by apprising students of the past, will enable them to judge the future; it will avail them of the experience of other times and other nations; it will qualify them as judges of the actions and designs of men; it will enable them to know ambition under every disguise it may assume; and knowing it, to defeat its views."

These are ideas to which we should listen again, 200 years later, not because we have failed, but rather because, having traveled a respectable distance on the inspiration of these lessons, we have tended to forget them when we

need them most. It would be entirely wrong to conclude that this Nation, because it is infinitely better schooled today, is therefore wiser, and thus safe from political folly and ethical lapses. While I firmly believe that the achievement of universal education is one of America's greatest triumphs, it does not follow that merely sending everybody to school is a guarantee of adequate education
(p. 7).

The destruction of the family was the first condition that blacks had to survive. Among humans, with the infant requiring such long-term parental nurture, the destruction of the family is a highly determinative condition. It is almost a guarantee of the dehumanization of the offspring. They are devoid of the natural and tender care of the mother and must rely upon convenient surrogates. The purpose of this was to facilitate the commercial success of the slave system, to be able to sell children without trauma, and to use women for breeding without the complication of husbands and children.

Moreover, the other condition was equally as determinative, namely, the denial of education. Slave states forbade the teaching of slaves. This meant that at the emancipation, except in a few notable cases, the 4 million blacks emancipated were penniless, separated from parents and other family, landless, and illiterate. Nothing of this magnitude was ever before done to any people. These individuals were transported from their homeland, emasculated, dehumanized, and left totally unprepared to participate in a free, democratic society. All of this was a mere three generations ago. Any black aged eighteen in 1980 could have had a great grandfather who was born a slave!

Furthermore, prejudice and economic deprivation became symbiotic, one feeding the other, causing the problem to become chronic. It is one thing to record the data and make statistical comparisons; it is another thing for blacks to spend their first fifty years of freedom in tattered overalls, living at the subsistence level, beholden to anyone who showed kindness, learning grammar by ear, coping with the culture by sheer mimicry of their "betters," undernourished, unemployed, and politically powerless.

This is the stuff of which prejudice is born. Such a condition seems to some to be deserved, but whether deserved or not, it creates strong, negative reactions. It

causes a strong consensus to develop and that consensus lasts. It fosters separation and segregation. By 1905, the former slave states had legalized segregation, and to all intents and purposes it was as binding as the Ten Commandments.

Once segregation was sealed, it was then legal, fitting, and proper to practice any form of discrimination against blacks. Prejudice fed discrimination; discrimination meant disadvantage; and this disadvantage meant further prejudice. No exact date can be fastened to this process because it was mutually advanced, each event propelling the other, and the result was a constant state of accrual.

This process and this pattern prevailed until 1960. The 1954 Supreme Court decision on the integration of public schools was really circumvented successfully for nearly a decade. Some changes began by 1960, but it has been a slow and grudging process. The black youth who are the bulk of the half million who are out of school and out of work have inherited the national indifference toward minority education and school integration.

The net result has been a crisis in self-concept among the persons who are most in need, a clear polarization and alienation, an attitudinal rigidity, and the consequent evidence of every form of social failure. We are confronted by two monumental problems: the social neglect of and begrudging response to the needs of minority youth; and the negative self-concept that leaves these youths among the most eligible candidates for the drug culture and lives of crime.

The irony is that the people who are most vocal in their expressions of contempt for these young people are least concerned about remedying the conditions that have adversely affected their lives. It is common knowledge today that the esteem that individuals have for their lives affects career choices, school achievement, participation in activities that promote intellectual growth and moral development, and their ability to become responsible participants in a social contract.

Our orientation toward these young people is through the social sciences, sociology, social anthropology, economics, urban studies, and government. We study them as an "outcome," epiphenomenally, as an unpredictable result to be treated symptomatically. But we need to deal with them causally, as a predictable

phenomenon that occurs as a result of exactly the kinds of adverse conditions we have been discussing. Furthermore, one reason why these young people are so alienated is that they feel that they have no friends who really care. The same hostility that the wealthy children--studied by Kenneth Keniston of Yale and Robert Cole of Harvard--have manifested is felt by the poorer youth. Alienation is alienation whether manifested in the rich or the poor.

They need to be approached through a professional and ethical sensitivity, before the fact, to find out what can be done to guarantee other outcomes for the social scientists to observe. We must commit ourselves not to be guided by the data already generated on neglected minorities, but, on the contrary, to be involved in generating new and more promising data.

Nevertheless, our commitment to pluralism, our democratic ideal of equality, our enviable history of creating upward mobility, and the ethical demands of the Judeo-Christian ethos which forms the basis for our culture all require that this issue be resolved at every level, and that the pursuit of a genuine community, with education as its primary agent of change, should continue. Vocational-technical educators are crucial to this process.

The answer to the needs of many minority youths is preparation for the job market or development of employability skills. There is a long tradition of black families educating their daughters and leaving their sons to work their way through school. And the tradition further dictated that blacks should get away from the servant and menial roles and pursue white collar careers. Thus teaching, preaching, and government service became popular career choices.

At the close of the nineteenth century, the issue of the type of education best suited for blacks was a paramount one. The focal characters in the debate were the principal of Tuskegee Institute in Alabama, Booker T. Washington, and W.E.B. DuBois, a Massachusetts born Harvard Ph.D. teaching at Atlanta University. Both were black, but DuBois was reared among whites in western Massachusetts, and Washington came from a slave background in West Virginia and walked across the entire expanse of Virginia from the Blue Ridge Mountains to the Chesapeake Bay to attend Hampton Institute.

DuBois held the view that blacks needed to train a leadership cadre in the liberal arts who could guide the destiny of the race in all matters. He expressed this

in terms of a "talented tenth" who should be found and sponsored and given the opportunity for this exceptional training.

Washington, on the other hand, felt that blacks had no choice other than to come to terms with their poverty and deprivation. One of his frequent expressions was, "We must begin at the bottom." He had contempt for those who wanted to educate blacks in the arts and humanities at the expense of training them first to make a living. He had been trained at Hampton Institute in Virginia, a postbellum school founded by Samuel Chapman Armstrong, a Union Army general, with support from the American Missionary Association, the Congregationalist missionary army, and the Freedmen's Bureau, a government agency established during the Reconstruction to aid blacks in their quest for fuller emancipation.

At Hampton, General Armstrong taught blacks and Native Americans in the trades and crafts, and he emphasized the dignity of manual labor. There was some suspicion among blacks that Armstrong was fostering a more sophisticated black labor pool for the growing economy of the country. At least this much is true, Hampton was a very persuasive perpetrator of Northern industrial philanthropy.

After a brief period of teaching at Hampton, Washington was called to Alabama to build a school at Tuskegee, which he modeled after the Hampton prototype. These two schools stood in sharp contrast to the prevailing notions of what college education should be. Most other black colleges of the late nineteenth century, Lincoln University of Pennsylvania, Atlanta University, Fisk University in Nashville, Shaw University in Raleigh, Virginia Union University in Richmond, and Wilberforce University of Ohio, were oriented toward the liberal arts and preparation for the ministry, teaching, and the medical and dental professions. Thus the DuBois philosophy was in operation. Moreover, blacks were in other schools such as Dartmouth, Oberlin, Brown, Bowdoin, and Colby, although in very small numbers. Even before the Emancipation blacks had graduated from New England universities where the curriculum was classical, with a heavy emphasis on the ancient languages, Latin and Greek. This was not merely an exercise in discipline, there was a basic conviction in that day that the truly educated man knew the classics, Homer and Hesiod, Livy and Cicero.

It was for this reason that DuBois and others objected so vehemently to Washington's emphasis on training in the trades. They felt that this would permanently consign blacks to an inferior stratum in society. They envisioned

blacks, not all, but at least a talented tenth of them, as keeping pace with white intellectuals: mastering languages, philosophy, history, logic and rhetoric, and destroying the stereotype of the illiterate black, shuffling along aimlessly around a tobacco warehouse or a wharf, or washing and scrubbing for whites, or riding on a flat back mule wagon.

Washington's rejoinder was that blacks needed money and property first, rather than worthless degrees in theology and highly dependent positions on tenuous college faculties, begging for the largesse of white philanthropists. He did not want to see blacks in beggarly, submenial jobs. He wanted them to *make* and lay bricks, *make* paint and do painting, *create* designs and build buildings, and cover all of the ancillary skills in electricity, plumbing, roofing, machine tooling, blueprinting, drafting, and carpentry. He was keenly interested in scientific agricultural and animal husbandry. His vision was to see blacks owning farms, dairies, and manufacturing plants, having clean and adequate housing, holding high level jobs in technology, and *then* pursuing the fine arts and the humanities.

It is obvious that neither program, that of DuBois or Washington, was the total answer, and they were not mutually exclusive alternative programs. The longer we ponder them, the more obvious it is that blacks needed both a sophisticated cadre of thinkers and strategists, and a strong economic base in home ownership, and income adequate for independence and stability. In all likelihood, human nature being what it is, factors other than reason and logic entered the controversy, and something like simple pride of authorship and jealousy caused the issues to become polarized and exacerbated.

The point of this review of a century old controversy is, it appears that DuBois may have won the war, but Washington won the battle. Washington became widely acclaimed throughout the world, appearing before presidents and the royalty of Europe, and garnering huge contributions for his cause from the oil and steel magnates of Cleveland, Pittsburgh, and New York. He also became the presidential advisor on black political affairs. As his influence grew he seemed to be more and more willing to accommodate himself to the slow pace of black political advancement and to their rigid social stratification by society. He ended his career with the reputation of being an "Uncle Tom," one who sells his people's interest for his own security and aggrandizement.

Meanwhile, blacks grew in their pursuit of the professions: teaching, social work, theology, and government service. Training in industrial arts and agriculture

remained a sort of second choice for those less prepared or those judged to have less than an acceptable aptitude for the liberal arts. DuBois' position thus prevailed, and today the trend continues, with blacks pursuing white collar occupations, and with jobs going begging in the technological and blue collar fields.

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Meanwhile, blacks grew in their pursuit of the professions: teaching, social work, theology, and government service. Training in industrial arts and agriculture remained a sort of second choice for those less prepared or those judged to have less than an acceptable aptitude for the liberal arts. DuBois' position thus prevailed, and today the trend continues, with blacks pursuing white collar occupations, and with jobs going begging in the technological and blue collar fields.

In a real and profound sense, the needs of blacks and other minorities, vis a vis vocational and technical education, will not be met if we assume a passive posture toward these clients and take for granted that the worth of the programs will be obvious and that the relevance of such education is, prima facie, self-evident. In this writer's view, such technical training is still regarded as a last resort for those who fall exhausted and defeated in pursuit of other goals. The absence of technical training is one of the most expensive and debilitating aspects of minority advancement.

Of course, there has been the long and persistent resistance of labor unions to black participation, the begrudging policies of industry to hire blacks only under duress (federal) and now, the cybernation of the work place and of industry, all of which reduce the number of technicians needed, including skilled ones, which is even more threatening.

Notwithstanding these impediments and this history, the challenge is to begin where we are and program ourselves to engage the wisdom, the intelligence, and the professional skill available to find the young minority pool that sorely needs training for job placement, for the fulfillment that life affords, for constructive citizenship, for the health of the nation, for the strengthening of families and communities, for the human resource supply that new and thriving industry will require, and for the strong economy that will keep a free nation from corrosion from within and destruction from without. The same ingenuity that medicine requires to respond to challenges from diseases, the ingenuity that engineers require to respond to challenges of distance, weather, and ecology, vocational and technical educators now need to respond to the challenges presented by unemployed minorities.

The first strategy is basic to all others. There is a strong temptation to look first to "gimmicks" and "dog and pony shows" to bring some clever or magical "trick" to the situation. Indeed, there are creative teaching strategies and changes in atmosphere that could improve the chances for success. This first recommended strategy is that *all* teachers in America should learn the history and background of *all* the students they are likely to teach. America is a diverse nation, and in almost every corner of the country there is another minority. And there is no pedagogical "quick fix" available.

A minority student entering a classroom, a shop, or a laboratory approaches the situation at best with a cautious inquisitiveness, wondering how hospitable the situation will be, or at worst, with a feeling of alienation or hostility reflecting a string of unhappy prior experiences. In the case of the former—an open, questioning posture—there is hope. If the teacher or shop supervisor is sensitive to the attitudes that could prevail and is willing to help the clients—students—over that first wall of suspicion, the door is open to a wide range of new experiences for both, for a receptivity to the teacher-learner situation at its best. One of the best kept secrets in all academe is how many students arrive at a firm conclusion in the first ten minutes of a student-teacher encounter on whether the teacher is on the side of students or not. And, in the case of a minority student there is, understandably, a higher degree of apprehension. A teacher, therefore, whose professional preparation was devoid of any introduction to this issue can do enormous harm and miss countless fine opportunities.

Professor Charles M. Galloway (1977), writing in another context, spoke of the administrator's posture toward teachers, and what he said can easily be transferred to the situation of a teacher and a minority student.

In order to understand the meaning of your own behavior, you have to examine yourself. It is necessary to realize that what you bring to any context may be more important than the so-called objective facts. When we read the behaviors of others, we project our meanings and attitudes. The greatest blocks and barriers to understanding may lie within us. Nonverbal behaviors reveal a lot, but they can be misleading if you only see what you want to see.

Most of us like to be around a caring, approachable person. I need to be convinced that you care about me, that you are accessible and available for contact. And I derive security and comfort in the realization that you are neither indifferent nor seek to avoid.

In this sense, I value approach moves and anticipate open expressions of thought and feeling. I resent avoidance cues.

If I detect by your face or eyes that you mean to avoid, that you remain closeted in your office, or that you are hiding behind a desk, I infer avoidance. When we detect that a person works to avoid us, these signs operate to represent our most basic fears. Are you avoiding me because our meeting would be negative? Are there unstated evaluations and negative feelings that would creep into our conversations? Do I matter so little that you seek to escape contact? Unfortunately, in the absence of good information, I fear the worst: that I am unworthy and deserve no special attention. Such signs serve as confirmations of my worst fear: a feeling of worthlessness.

In any human contact we seek to be acknowledged and recognized. I want others to know I am here, that I exist, that I am not invisible. Acknowledging others provides the necessary evidence of presence. All of us watch for the knowing glance, the greeting look, the interpersonal contact which says, "I see you, I know you are there." This is the power of acknowledgement, and its expression arises without words. I can say, "Good morning," or "Hello Bill," and the words can have a hollow, ringing sound. But a special look can signify everything. Many students sit in classrooms believing teachers do not know they are there. They are otherwise invisible (p. 33).

Any program that prepares teachers for urban schools—and who knows *where* a job will be found—cannot be forgiven for failing to ensure that somewhere along

the line students are given an opportunity to study, first hand and systematically, the background of the minorities that may one day be their students. In our schools, the social science courses treat this topic very generally, and it leaves a chasm of ignorance that is difficult to bridge. In the late sixties, black students shocked the nation by asking for black studies. The responses from intellectual blacks and white scholars were negative. The demand was confused with a plea for lowered standards or for nationalism or for racism in reverse. There was not sufficient empathy for the students. Older blacks who had "arrived" were most resentful. They saw their own status threatened with the implication that blacks could not grasp what others grasped and had to be fed a "pablumized" diet. These older blacks, however, missed the point. The students making the request felt orphaned by the academic community, treated as though they had no past and were late entrants to the quest for excellence by the standards set by the majority community.

This feeling grew from 1960 with the decolonization of Africa and the sit-in movement in Greensboro, North Carolina, through all of the marches of Martin Luther King and the civil rights legislation of the Johnson Era. The nearer they came to fulfilling their rights and getting a clearer vision of their destiny, the more resentful blacks were of the tacit inferior status that the curriculum assigned to them. Although they could not articulate their need, it was beyond any doubt that they had a need. For those of us who witnessed the period, it is still shameful the way the schools left these students to fight this battle alone, outside the channels of academic protocol. As a result of this indifference, some of the programs were a disaster with all sorts of extreme outcomes.

Even today, the outcome is a disaster because most black studies courses are taken by blacks, but by whites only under the most unusual of circumstances. It is curious that *today* one can visit campuses such as Pennsylvania State, Ohio State, Rutgers, Michigan State, and Illinois and find not *one* white student in vocational-technical education who is taking a course designed to acquaint young professionals with the background, culture, history, and the literature of blacks. This is a safe statement and the fact that it is, is the clearest evidence that we regard the issue as chimerical, not real and permanent. These courses are available, but they are evidently not recommended and not subscribed to by white students.

How serious is this? Well, it means that most whites have no opportunity to overcome their prejudiced views about blacks, for better or for worse. The views

they hold have filtered through to them from the stereotypic images so familiar in the media. The media deal with the exceptional, the black athletes, entertainers, and murderers. The normal flow of black life with its modulations, its adjustments, triumphs, and travail are hidden from the larger society's view. Consequently, the white teachers bring to the class or laboratory or shop either their parochialisms and innocence, or vile prejudices and contempt. This is hardly the best that we can do. It is not a question of special pleading. Our Puerto Rican, Chicano, Asian, Afro-American, and Native American students deserve better professional preparation of their teachers. This is a first strategy.

With what kind of courses are we concerned? Vocational technical teachers are professionals, and just as engineers must know the properties of *all* of the materials they use, coaches must know the speed, weight, endurance, and marital status of *all* of their players, and physicians must know the pharmacology of *all* the medicines they prescribe, so must a professional vocational-technical teacher know the pupils to be taught. Skill in acquiring such experience and knowledge can be learned.

In an earlier article I tried to make this point (Proctor 1978).

How do these principles apply to the school experience? First, the vicariousness that teachers need is not something that we are born with; it has to be cultivated.

It can be learned. It means that middle-class teachers will have to become familiar with cultural anthropology, urban sociology, and American history that deals with the socio-economic antecedents to current conditions. All of this should be a part of any liberal arts program, or at least it should be taught in courses required of teachers.

For a teacher to be "vicarious" means to know the environment and the gestalt of the pupils, to have an informed view of the world the child lives in, and to have investigated it in sufficient depth to be able to feel something of what the child feels. Imagination permits us to accomplish this if the commitment is there.

In the case of black children, the news about them is so distorted, the test scores and "averages" are so widely advertised, and the instances of violent

behavior are so talked about that teachers are hardly ever able to approach a black child with calm neutrality. To stay clear of this barrage of negative reporting, a teacher will have to get acquainted with some black families who care about their children and have excelled themselves. It requires getting to know black communities and coming to see what black institutions and life-styles are like in order to set facts against the horror stories that distort and confuse (p. 2035).

Moreover, the issue of minorities in America is a persistent, relevant, and large one. It is not intermittent or irrelevant or miniscule. It merits wide attention. And to ask *any* educated persons to be prepared to think about it with an informed data base, to express opinions on it thoughtfully and factually, and to subordinate their visceral reactions to it in the light of a thorough understanding is not asking too much. Very often individuals' professions may require them to go beyond the matter of personal preferences and the conditioning of the culture in preparing for the work that must be done. So the vocational-technical teacher needs to study the culture of minorities in order to appreciate differences, to distinguish between what is profound and determinative and what is superficial and negligible. In order to understand the reasons for educational deficits, attitudes of alienation, and indifference toward some forms of so-called motivation, another urgent input is knowledge of the history of the minorities.

Dr. William D. Smith, director for development of a black studies program at the University of Cincinnati in Ohio commented as follows on this need:

It is obvious that many students, both black and white, will not be interested in majoring or minoring in black studies for various reasons which are understandable; however, there is no apparent reason why all students who attend a liberal arts college or university should not be required to enroll in one course of black history. This recommendation, of course, presupposes that all liberal arts colleges and universities should be required to offer a course in black history. Where institutions offer such courses as electives, many white students who have had no experiences with the black American will not voluntarily enroll in such a course even though they desperately need it; therefore, they will continue to believe in the myths about black people and retain their racist attitudes. For 350 years most liberal arts colleges and universities have required their students to enroll in an American history course which deals with a history that purposely omitted

black contributors to American society. We cannot wait that long again for black history to be fused into American history. For one thing, if it had been told as it really happened, the American people would not be in such a difficult situation today with respect to race relations (p. 678).

There is no need to study black English, whatever that is, but there is a need to develop an ear for any dialect, any speech peculiarity, the language of the poor, the black and the white poor, the Hispanics, and *all* other new users of English. The opportunity for patience, helpfulness, and effort abounds.

Ultimately the concern is simply a matter of serving students who need us, and possessing the skills necessary to serve them. This is not a new or unique goal. It is applying an old principle to a current situation. For example, a college president once despaired upon seeing recruited athletes dropped near the end of their college years after athletic eligibility had expired. He heard that one had failed a comprehensive English examination that was required for graduation. He made contact and asked the student why he thought he had failed. He replied:

"I just can't get that weird use of pronouns like It is I. We are they. This is she. I am he."

The president experimented. He secured for the student a chance for reexamination and tutored the student himself, looking for the *real* failure. He worked with him on the correct usage of personal pronouns. The president explained:

"You *do* know how to use those pronouns. On the basketball court, did I ever hear you say 'Throw the ball to *I* or we beat *they* last night?'"

The student said that he did not, but he did not know the rules. He spoke only from habit. The president explained to him that there were two kinds of people in sentences: Those who *do* and those who are *done unto*. He further explained that those who *do* are in the nominative case, and that those *done unto* are in the objective case. And the *done unto* ones in the objective case generally were the "M" crowd, such as *him*, *them*, *whom*, and *me*, with *you*, *us*, and *her* as exceptions. The student asked,

"What about whomever?"

The president responded,

"He has been *done unto* but we don't know his name yet! Or *whoever* did it to him!

In a moment of wild hilarity the student caught on, and one test after another showed that he had comprehended this lesson. It was simply a matter of knowing enough about the student to see the world through his eyes.

The second strategy is to search for any and all indices of learning ability, and the varied and often unexpected promises of dormant capacity that may be hidden by the veneer of a subculture or obscured by isolation and deprivation. The testing devices we use today reveal more about children's opportunities than about their abilities. Vocabulary is critical to testing, and deprived children whose vocabulary is severely limited will not succeed in test taking. Moreover, all languages communicate in symbols, metaphors, analogies, and similes that derive from experience, and one whose experiences and learning are different will respond differently when forced into a situation where expected norms are called for. The intelligence test scores of both adult and juvenile Jewish emigrants from Eastern Europe during the post World War I era, for example, made them look like morons. In retrospect, that particular application of intelligence tests looks moronic!

Tests are important, however. The point here is that when measuring intelligence and aptitude, certain cautions and limitations should be employed and regarded. Tests are important in establishing certain norms of performance by which we can measure progress and compare teaching results. They are also limited in determining ability and intelligence because they cannot screen out the factors of environment and opportunity.

This fact is widely acknowledged, but in practical terms students who are culturally different are still penalized. Amada M. Padilla and Blas M. Garza (1975) emphasized this in an article on I.Q. tests:

Culture-free tests are supposed to measure performance in terms that are completely unrelated to any particular socioeconomic environment. Accordingly, an environment-free intelligence test could be taken to measure "true" intelligence.

Without reviewing the debate that has ensued from this approach, let us suggest that efforts to develop culture-free tests were doomed to failure from the beginning. All human experience is modulated by human society, and no test can be experience free. Experience, furthermore, cannot be separated from its social context. The materials used in the test, the language of the test, the manner of getting the testee to respond, the criteria for choosing which responses to record, the categories into which responses are classified, the test's validity criterion—all are culture bound (p. 57).

The vocational-technical teacher needs to understand how necessary it is to search for every possible index of promise in dealing with students who are culturally different and especially with those who are educationally and economically deprived. One does get the insight, however, that there is a level of deprivation and social despair that is best dealt with in an institution that can accomplish recovery from the losses due to *no* parenting, the salvaging of young people from the culture of crime and drug abuse, the removal of growing numbers from welfare rolls and court rosters, through the creation of promising careers and lives of usefulness and honor. Urban—and exurban and suburban—principals can name for you the six, twelve, or forty pupils under their jurisdiction who cannot be served by the public schools; whose lives need more attention than public schools have available to give.

We need to provide another setting for these individuals, some rural, some urban, spaced about the country, perhaps using abandoned military facilities and grounds already prepared with plumbing and sewerage, and electric lines and water supply. We need to establish self-contained *kibbutzim*, where young people are exposed to a quality resident staff trained to guide them through a resocialization process, combining a basic curriculum and vocational-technical training with work integrated with the training to meet *all* of the institution's needs—food production, preparation, and serving, painting, carpentry, computer service, basic medical care, plumbing, floriculture, cleaning, groundskeeping and landscaping, animal breeding and husbandry, auto mechanics, television and electronic service, cabinet making, flooring, roofing, accounting, and management. We need to do this at one third of the cost of recidivism and parole and of the inestimable costs of human neglect.

Many embellishments to such a program would be worth the effort and could incur only modest cost, such as teaching everyone to swim and to learn other sports, and developing in all an appreciation for self-government and civic

responsibility. Presently, our best efforts are failing, and the number of candidates for such a program continues to grow. The cornerstone of such a program would be vocational-technical education, which would make productive citizens of social liabilities.

We have to continue to look for answers to the problem of dealing with the casualties who are still with us as a consequence of the pendulum action of the economy: poverty that is endemic and unredressed, racism that has been rampant for generations, and the stigma of cultural isolation. All of these social exigencies have a compounding effect as they operate within a fatal ambience.

This can be changed with sensitive teachers who can find exciting possibilities in each life, who recognize as an abiding principle the dignity of persons, and who are committed to the goal of offering the best chance for each life to develop the competence needed to function independently in a free society.

Finally, there remains the need for all of those in vocational education to clarify their own values with respect to the issue of justice and fairness, and to settle in their own minds exactly what moral obligation society has with regard to minorities. It is difficult for people to be enthusiastic about a cause they hope will fail. An attitude of presupposed failure makes the days grow longer and longer and the burden heavier and heavier. When people are engaged in a cause that has their intellectual as well as visceral support, on the other hand, time seems to pass swiftly, and no day seems long enough.

This is especially true for those who work with the blind, physically or mentally impaired, or socially maladjusted. If they feel that these individuals all have what they deserve, this is one style of effort; but if they feel that such individuals have been victims of the caprice of nature or of the cruelty and callousness of a brutal home and community, this constitutes another level of effort in helping them.

John Rawls work (1971), *A Theory of Justice*, makes the point that justice rests on a notion of fairness, that all of us, at an imaginary *original position*, with all cultural and economic accretions scraped away, should be equal. There is no sound basis in logic, ethics, or in history for one person to require, demand, or justify being better off than anyone else. At birth no one merits anything. The culture, the society, the genes, and the ecology, however, order that some of us will be more heavily advantaged than others, and likewise that others will be more

disadvantaged. No one has *deserved* these starting points, but the course of our lives is seriously affected by these inherited, undeserved elements that give us either an edge or a handicap at the very *original position*. Justice and fairness require, therefore, that we do whatever is necessary and possible to improve the chances of those who appear to be arbitrarily and undeservedly disadvantaged. This means special teachers for the deaf and blind, special elevators for the paraplegics, and smaller classes for the brain damaged. It means special efforts for the Appalachian whites, the Russian Jewish emigrant, the newly arrived Hispanics, and the Afro-Americans from the South or from all the other crumbling, dingy, and dangerous ghettos. It also means a reexamination of our values. As has been stated (Proctor 1976), we have been acculturated to behave in another way:

The accent in our society has been on competition and success, success being the mark of personal supremacy. This attitude is passed down through the whole system; and education becomes, therefore, a series of scratch lines with one peak after another. This process is designed to select winners and losers and to fill closets and cases with trophies, ribbons, and plaques. So much emphasis is placed on winning. We are taught to be self-reliant in order to win. We start our kids out with special tutors to offset the genes that block them from learning algebra. This self-regard enlarges to group-regard and class-regard. Our positions are jealously guarded. Instead of fostering community, this kind of self-reliance fosters strife, competition, and subtle forms of preferentialism. The culture is geared for noncommunity rather than community, and therefore it is geared up for the brutalization of persons rather than for the humanizing of the society. We are better trained to compete, to defeat others, to succeed, to prevail, to be victorious than we are trained to cooperate, to inspire, to support, and to take another by the hand. If then the person of the new age must be a participant in real community, what is reasonable and fair to ask of education? (p. 244)

This is an ideal, a value that one may embrace or not. No one can be forced to believe anything, but it is clear that this value must be in place before we can have much hope for success in working with pupils with special needs. The encouraging truth is that more and more teachers are becoming aware of how much more is involved than mere certification in a traditional teacher training program in vocational-technical education. That curriculum needs revision. Above all, the commitment of educators (teachers) to the ideal of justice in a humanized community must be unyielding and firm.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Before vocational educators can adequately meet the special needs of special groups, they must be committed to a philosophy of equitable education. The issue of equity in education has received a great deal of attention over the last ten years from the legislative, judicial, and academic sectors. As a result of this attention, research and analysis have shown that the term "equity" has a different connotation for nearly everyone who has attempted to define and apply it to educational programs. In addition, a host of related terms such as equality, disparity, and discrimination are a part of the vocational educator's daily vocabulary.

In an attempt to help vocational educators to articulate a definition of equity, the National Center for Research in Vocational Education has commissioned seventeen papers on equity from three broad perspectives—academic, vocational, and special needs. The authors in each of the three groups provide their own perceptions of and experiences with equity in education to bring vocational educators to a better understanding of this complex but timely issue.

The National Center is indebted to these seventeen authors for their contribution to furthering research on equity in vocational education.

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